

**ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY ON ASSEMBLY BILL 60  
BLANKET BOND FOR CVSO & COMMISSIONERS**

Good Morning Chairman Brooks and members of the committee. My name is Tanya Hein, and I work for Rep. Karl Van Roy who is the author of Assembly Bill 60 which is before you today. Unfortunately, the Representative is attending another event in his district this morning and cannot be with you.

Assembly Bill 60 is very simple. Under current law, county officers must be covered by a bond which can be provided as a blanket bond. However, county veterans service officers (CVSOs) and county veterans service commissioners must provide individual surety bonds. Individual surety bonds are more costly for counties to provide.

At the request of Brown County, AB 60 extends the blanket bond coverage to CVSOs and the county veterans service commissioners. By decreasing the amount the county must pay to bond these individuals, the county can increase the amount of money available for direct benefits to veterans living and working in our communities. Since Veterans Service Office budgets are inherently small, any amount of cost savings has a large positive impact. I have provided you with a letter from the Brown County Risk Manager in support of this legislation.

We can find no downside to this legislation which also has the support of the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to try and answer any questions you may have.

**BACKGROUND INFO:**

Rep. Stone authored AB 263 in the 2003-04 session which was signed into law by Gov. Doyle as 2003 Act 204. Prior to this law, only towns could use a blanket bond for their officials. Act 204 extended that blanket bond to include county, city, and village officials. There was no opposition to the bill which passed both houses on voice votes. The legislative record shows no mention by anyone of the CVSOs or commission members.

Rep. Stone's office confirmed that no thought was ever given to the CVSOs or commission members at any time during the development or passage of his bill. By all accounts, it appears that leaving the CVSOs and commission members out of 2003 Act 204 was an oversight, perhaps because they are covered in Chapter 45 of the statutes which has to do with veterans.

According to the Wisconsin Counties Association, some counties follow the statute requiring individual surety bonds and some counties do not. For those counties that are following current law, this bill will save them some money. For those counties that are not following current law, this bill will bring them into compliance.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

*Brown County*

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BARBARA J. WEST, CRM, ARM  
RISK MANAGER

March 23, 2011

Committee on Urban and Local Affairs  
Wisconsin State Assembly

RE: Proposed Blanket Bond for County Veterans Service Officer and Commission

Dear Committee Members,

The veterans throughout this country have made numerous sacrifices to serve and protect the rights and freedoms for all of us. Statute 45.81 (2) requires county government to purchase a separate surety bond for commission members and the county veterans service officer rather than allow for a schedule or blanket bond which is allowed for other county officials 59.21 (1). The additional cost of the separate surety bond increases the budget for our Veterans' Service Office and reduces the amount the county has available for direct benefits to our veterans.

I respectfully request that you support the change to allow commission members and the county veterans' service officer to provide a schedule or blanket bond. This change will not free up significant dollars but each additional dollar that can be used for direct benefits to our veterans is one small way to say "Thank You" for the sacrifices they have made.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. West, CRM, ARM  
Brown County Risk Manager





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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs

FROM: David Callender, WCA Legislative Associate *DK*

DATE: March 29, 2011

SUBJECT: Support for Assembly Bill 60

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) supports Assembly Bill 60.

The bill eliminates the current statutory requirement that county veterans service officers be bonded separately from a county's blanket bond for other elected and appointed officials. WCA believes this will increase administrative efficiency and reduce costs to counties.

In discussions with county veterans service officers, WCA has found that there is considerable confusion about the current law requirements. While some counties are aware of the law and provide separate bonding for their VSOs, many others are unaware of the provision and include their VSOs as part of the blanket bond.

The bill will allow counties the flexibility to determine which type of bonding is preferable and, in some instances, to bring the law into line with current county practices.

WCA respectfully requests that the Committee support this bill.